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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Miami-Dade Community College (MDCC) to assess the relationship between students' basic skills performance and three outcome measures: retention, graduation, and academic progress. Specifically, the study compared the performance and persistence of White, Black, and Hispanic students while equating for basic skills performance as measured by Comparative Guidance and Placement (CGP) test scores in reading, writing, and computation. Students achieving above the placement test score on all three CGP tests and those falling below this score were analyzed as separate groups, and quartile ranges were determined for each of the three tests based on national norms. Study findings, based on the records of all full-time, first-time-in-college students entering MDCC in fall 1980, included: (1) by summer 1982, 19.4% of the Hispanic students, 18.8% of the White students, and 7.6% of the Black students had graduated; (2) Hispanic students also had higher reenrollment rates (68.6%) than Black or White students (52.0% and 51.7%, respectively); (3) retention and graduation rates were significantly higher for students scoring above the placement test score on the CGP than for those scoring below it within each ethnic group; and (4) 40% of the White students, 60% of the Hispanic students, and 80% of the Black students scored in the lowest two quartiles on the reading and written English portions of the CGP. A separate report on retention patterns is included. (HB)

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RETENTION, GRADUATION, AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS AS RELATED TO BASIC SKILLS

Research Report No. 82-36

November 1982

John Losak

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OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

JC 830 077

RETENTION, GRADUATION, AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS AS RELATED TO BASIC SKILLS

This report addresses the general question of whether there is a relationship between tested basic skills performance and three outcome measures: retention, graduation, and academic progress (SOAP).[1] Previous data at Miami-Dade indicate that students in the major ethnic categories show differences in these outcome measures.[2] More specifically, black non-Hispanic students tend to show lower graduation and retention rates, and a smaller proportion of students in a clear SOAP status when compared to white non-Hispanics or Hispanics.

Comparison between students in different ethnic categories carries an implicit assumption that the groups are homogenous on relevant background variables. This may not be a good assumption when examining academic outcome measures. Specifically, the groups may not be homogenous in their entry level skills and may obtain quite different outcomes over similar time spans. At Miami-Dade, data are now available on tested basic skills performance at entry which can be related to academic outcome measures. Students are administered the Comparative Guidance and Placement self-scoring tests in Reading, Writing and Computation in order to assess entry level skills and make differential placement decisions. This report compares the performance of students in the major ethnic categories when basic skills levels are equated.

[1]For purposes of this study, academic progress is measured by the Standards of Academic Progress (SOAP) classifications of students at Miami-Dade. The classifications are based upon criteria involving grade point average, cumulative credits, and course withdrawals. A "Clear" status indicates the College's judgment of satisfactory academic progress.

[2]See the analysis in Research Report #80-79, Equal Access/Equal Opportunity at Miami-Dade Community College Cohort III Analysis and SOAP summary in Research Report #81-62, Summary of Standards of Academic Progress Closing Fall & Winter Terms 1979-80 and 1980-81.

Method

A cohort of all tested full-time first-time-in-college students was selected from the Closing Fall Term 1980-81 file (N=4318). Re-enrollment and Academic Standing for the subsequent Winter Term 1980-81, Fall Term 1981-82, and Winter Term 1981-82 were determined from student records. The cohort was also matched against graduation records at the end of the Summer Term 1981-82. Two basic analyses were performed:

1) Students above the placement score on all three Comparative Guidance and Placement (CGP) tests and students below the placement score on all three CGP tests were analyzed as separate groups. An outcome analysis by ethnic category within each group provides a broad method of equating tested basic skills performance.
2) Quartile ranges were determined for each test (national norms) and ethnic performance on the outcome measures was examined within each quartile range.

The analysis in this report provides a control for initial skill levels in reading, writing, and computation. By additionally examining quartile scores, it is possible to assess the performance of those students who would not have been eligible for entry in the State University System. This analysis assumes that only upper quartile students would have been eligible for admission. Graduation was used as an outcome measure but it must be stressed that the figures are underestimates of actual graduation rates since most students do not graduate until their third year at Miami-Dade.

Results and Discussion - Equating for Broad Skill Levels

Table 1 presents data on retention and graduation rates by ethnic category for all tested full-time first-time-in-college students, for those students above the placement score on all three tests, and for those students below the placement score on all three tests. Data for all tested students regardless of differential entry skills show that Hispanic students have the largest re-enrollment through Winter 1981-82 (68.6% re-enrolled). White non-Hispanic and black non-Hispanic students have lower re-enrollment rates (51.7% and 52.0% respectively) but are nearly identical to each other. A marked difference in the graduation rates by ethnic category is apparent. The proportion of white non-Hispanic and Hispanic graduates (18.8% and 19.4% respectively) is more than twice that of black non-Hispanics (7.6%). These data are similar to prior findings of differential success for ethnic groups.

Data for students above or below the placement score on all three tests permit comparison within broadly equated entry skill levels, and comparison among these skill levels as well. Note first that retention and graduation rates are generally higher for students above the placement score. Within this group, re-enrollment rate is highest for Hispanics (75.2%), next highest for black non-Hispanics (60.9%) and lowest for white non-Hispanics (55.5%). Graduation rate for black non-Hispanics in this group increases to 17.4% which is much more comparable to the graduation rate for white non-Hispanics (23.0%). Hispanic graduation rate is clearly much higher than the other two ethnic categories (29.8%).

Clear ethnic differences are not as apparent for the group of students below the placement score on all three tests. Re-enrollment

Table 1

Retention and Graduation Rates by Ethnic, Controlling for Tested Basic Skills Performance, Full-Time First-time-in-college Students (J's) Closing Fall 1980-81

	Total all Tested Full-time J Students, Selected Ethnic Categories						Basic Skills Performance									
							Above Placement Score on All Three Tests, Selected Ethnic Categories						Below Placement Score on All Three Tests, Selected Ethnic Categories			
	White Non-Hispanic		Black Non-Hispanic		Hispanic		White Non-Hispanic		Black Non-Hispanic		Hispanic		White Non-Hispanic		Black Non-Hispanic		Hispanic	
Year/Term	Re-enrolled No.	%	Re-enrolled No.	%	Re-enrolled No.	%	Re-enrolled No.	%	Re-enrolled No.	%	Re-enrolled No.	%	Re-enrolled No.	%	Re-enrolled No.	%	Re-enrolled No.	%
Fall 1980-81 (Initial Enrollment)	1,338	100.0	779	100.0	2,125	100.0	712	100.0	92	100.0	779	100.0	95	100.0	352	100.0	341	100.0
Winter 1980-81	1,085	81.1	668	85.8	1,893	89.1	599	84.1	78	84.8	720	92.4	67	70.5	290	82.4	280	82.1
Fall 1981-82	787	58.8	463	59.4	1,578	74.3	443	62.2	60	65.2	636	81.6	50	52.6	184	52.3	213	62.5
Winter 1981-82	692	51.7	405	52.0	1,457	68.6	395	55.5	56	60.9	586	75.2	41	43.2	155	44.0	186	54.6
Graduates through Summer 1981-82	251	18.8	59	7.6	413	19.4	164	23.0	16	17.4	232	29.8	5	5.3	8	2.3	17	5.0

rate is almost identical for white non-Hispanic and black non-Hispanic students (43.2% or 44.0% respectively). Re-enrollment rate for Hispanics is higher than the other two major ethnic categories (54.6%) but the difference is not as great as was noted for the group of students above the placement score on all three tests. Graduation rate for white non-Hispanic and Hispanic students is very low but nearly identical (5.3% and 5.0% respectively). Once again, students in both of these major ethnic categories are graduating at more than double the proportion for black non-Hispanics (2.3% graduates).

In summary, when the data are refined by separately analyzing students above the placement score on all three tests and students below the placement score on all three tests, retention and graduation rates are higher for students above the placement score on all three tests. Further, black non-Hispanic students above the placement score on all three tests have a higher re-enrollment rate than white non-Hispanic students (60.9% vs 55.5%), and their graduation rate is more comparable to that of white non-Hispanics (17.4% vs 23.0%).

Table 2 presents data on Standards of Academic Progress (SOAP) performance by ethnic category for all tested full-time first-time-in-college students, students above the placement score on all three tests, and students below the placement score on all three tests. SOAP performance has been summarized by considering both the total terms enrolled and the number of terms in a Clear status. Since four major terms were examined, students could have been enrolled for all these terms or for only some of them. And, given the number of terms enrolled, the student had the possibility of being in a Clear status for all terms, under the

Standards for all terms, or having a mixture of Clear and non-Clear terms. The headings on the left side of the table distinguish between students who were enrolled for three to four terms and students who were enrolled for only one or two terms. Within these two groups, the number of students who were in a Clear status for their entire enrollment and the number of students who came under the Standards for their entire enrollment are indicated separately. Totals are presented for the number of students in a Clear status for all terms, the number of students coming under the Standards for all terms (non-Clear), and the number of students who had a "mixed" result (were Clear some terms but under the Standards for others). These data essentially present a summary of the academic performance of individual students across consecutive terms.

Data for tested students as a whole show that approximately 80% of all students were either on a Clear status for their entire enrollment or came under the Standards for their entire enrollment. That is, only 15 to 20% of students were in the "mixed" group having both Clear terms and non-Clear terms. Comparisons between the major ethnic categories indicate that Hispanic students were more likely to enroll for three to four consecutive terms (64.6%) than were white non-Hispanics (53.1%) or black non-Hispanics (49.7%). Additionally, 62.2% of Hispanic students were enrolled three to four terms and Clear for all of these terms compared to 51.6% of white non-Hispanics and 46.2% of black non-Hispanics. White non-Hispanic students were more likely than students in the other ethnic categories to have enrolled for only one or two terms (33.9% of white non-Hispanics, 29.4% of black non-Hispanics, and 18.2% of black non-Hispanic students).

Table 2

Standards of Academic Progress Performance by Ethnic, Controlling for Tested Basic Skills Performance, Full-Time First-time-in-college Students (J's) Closing Fall 1980-81 Through Closing Winter 1981-82

Terms Enrolled vs. SOAP Performance	Total all Tested Full-time J Students, Selected Ethnic Categories						Basic Skills Performance: Above Placement Score on All Three Tests, Selected Ethnic Categories						Basic Skills Performance: Below Placement Score on All Three Tests, Selected Ethnic Categories					
	White Non-Hispanic		Black Non-Hispanic		Hispanic		White Non-Hispanic		Black Non-Hispanic		Hispanic		White Non-Hispanic		Black Non-Hispanic		Hispanic	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Enrolled 3-4 Terms																		
All Clear	690	51.6	360	46.2	1,322	62.2	400	56.2	52	56.5	571	73.3	35	36.8	129	36.6	152	44.6
All SOAP	20	1.5	27	3.5	51	2.4	11	1.5	2	2.2	13	1.7	4	4.2	16	4.6	11	3.2
Enrolled 1-2 Terms																		
All Clear	354	26.4	151	19.4	282	13.3	180	25.3	15	16.3	85	10.9	24	25.3	82	23.3	67	19.6
All SOAP	101	7.5	78	10.0	105	4.9	40	5.6	8	8.7	26	3.3	16	16.8	43	12.2	28	8.2
Total All Clear	1,044	78.0	511	65.6	1,604	75.5	580	81.5	67	72.8	656	84.2	59	62.1	211	59.9	219	64.2
Total All SOAP	121	9.0	105	13.5	156	7.3	51	7.1	10	10.9	39	5.0	20	21.0	59	16.8	39	11.4
Mixed	173	13.0	163	20.9	365	17.2	81	11.4	15	16.3	84	10.8	16	16.8	82	23.3	83	24.4
Total	1,338	100.0	779	100.0	2,125	100.0	712	100.0	92	100.0	779	100.0	95	100.0	352	100.0	341	100.0

Data for students above or below the placement score on all three tests indicate that a higher proportion of students above the placement score approach continuous enrollment with all terms Clear (approximately 60% of the students above versus 40% of the students below). Within this group of students above the placement score on all three tests, black non-Hispanic students were as likely as white non-Hispanic students to have enrolled for three to four terms and been on a Clear status for all of these terms. (56.2% of white non-Hispanic and 56.5% of black non-Hispanics). By comparison, a much higher proportion of Hispanic students are in this category (73.3%). White non-Hispanic students continue to show the highest proportion of students enrolled for only one or two terms when compared to the other two ethnic categories.

For the group of students below the placement score on all three tests, the proportion of white non-Hispanic and black non-Hispanic students who have enrolled three to four terms and were in a Clear status for all of these terms is again almost identical (36.8% and 36.6% respectively). White non-Hispanic students continue to have a higher proportion enrolled only one to two terms when compared to the other ethnic categories. This parallels the consistently lower re-enrollment rate for white non-Hispanics found in Table 1.

In summary, when students above the placement score on all three tests and students below the placement score on all three tests are examined separately,a higher proportion of students above the placement score approach continuous enrollment (three to four terms) and are on a Clear status for all of these terms (approximately 60% vs 40% respectively). The proportion of white non-Hispanic and black non-Hispanic students showing continuous enrollment and a continuous Clear status is almost

identical (56.2% vs 56.5%). For students below the placement score a much smaller proportion show continuous enrollment and a Clear status for that enrollment. However, comparison between black non-Hispanic and white non-Hispanic students reveals that the proportion showing continuous enrollment and a Clear status is again almost identical.

Implications

The data presented above indicate that an unrefined control for basic skills leads to quite different conclusions about the comparative performance of students in the major ethnic categories. At the higher skill levels (above the placement score on all three tests), black non-Hispanic and white non-Hispanic students show comparable performance on the academic outcome measures examined. Note, however, that only 11.8% of tested black non-Hispanic students were at the higher skill levels compared to 53.2% of white non-Hispanic students. When these ethnic groups are compared without equating entry skill levels, poor performance for black non-Hispanics is the inevitable outcome since the majority of students are at lower skill levels.

One added concern that may be suggested by the data is that retention and graduation rates (after two years) are quite low for tested students as a whole. Said another way, one of the continuing concerns for many persons who are aware of the progress of students through open access colleges is that the attrition rate is extremely high. Astin[3] reports that of those students who are full-time first-time-in-college at open door public two-year colleges, not more than one-third ever graduate. The figures at Miami-Dade are virtually the same as reported by Astin. Whether

[3]Alexander W. Astin, Preventing Students from Dropping Out, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 1975

this is a good rate or a poor rate is a value judgment. From the perspective of quality control, it could be argued that the attrition rate should be at least 70 to 75 percent since quality control measures on the input side are virtually non-existent. Quality control must be in classroom assessment of the student's progress by the instructor, and hence result in high attrition. If 80 percent of community college students eventually earned an Associate in Arts degree, the colleges could surely be faulted for turning out students who had minimal academic demands placed upon them.

Yet, these arguments are generally conducted in an empirical vacuum because there are rarely any outcome measures against which to answer the question of whether community college graduates have met acceptable criteria. At Miami-Dade and in the rest of the State of Florida, the CLAST[4] examination will provide some benchmark for the next few years with regard to the progress students have made with regard to learning skills. The examination is not an achievement test in the broadest sense of the term and only encompasses reading, writing, and computation skills. While these measures are obviously limited, they are more than has been available in the past for making judgments about student progress.

[4]The College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) is designed to measure competencies in Reading, Writing and Mathematics for students entering their Junior year. Community College students must currently write the examination in order to receive an Associate in Arts degree. Any student progressing to the Junior year must also write the examination. Passing scores will be in use by 1984.

Results and Discussion - Quartile Analysis

Tables 3 through 5 present data on retention, graduation, and SOAP performance controlling for quartile ranges on the Basic Skills Test. Quartile ranges for each test were determined from the CGP national norms so that comparisons could be made within these ranges. The left hand portion of the table gives the particular Comparative Guidance and Placement (CGP) Test, and the quartile ranges considered. A total is given for each test which replicates the ethnic comparison for all tested students regardless of skill levels given in Tables 1 and 2. The first set of data in each table summarizes findings by quartile for all students.

Table 3 presents re-enrollment rate by ethnic. Note first that the re-enrollment rate for all students irrespective of quartile range was 60.4% after four major terms. For all three CGP tests, re-enrollment rates are highest for the upper quartile students and decline progressively through the quartile ranges. Comparisons between the three major ethnic categories indicate that re-enrollment rate is highest for Hispanics (68.6%) and nearly equal for white non-Hispanics and black non-Hispanics (51.7% and 52.0% respectively). When re-enrollment is examined within quartile ranges, however, black non-Hispanic students show a higher re-enrollment rate than white non-Hispanics in almost every case. For example, 66.7% of black non-Hispanic students in the upper quartile on the CGP Reading Test re-enrolled compared to 56.1% of white non-Hispanics. These data mirror the general findings of Table 1. Note also that the proportion of students in each ethnic group falling in the different quartile ranges varies considerably. More than 80% of black non-Hispanic students are in the lowest two quartiles on the CGP Reading and Written English Expression

Table 3

Re-enrollment Rates by Ethnic, Controlling for Quartile Ranges on Basic Skills Tests,
Full-Time First-time-in-college Students (J's), Closing Fall 1980-81 Through Closing Winter 1981-82

Test and Quartile Ranges	Total All Ethnic				Selected Ethnic Categories: White Non-Hispanic				Black Non-Hispanic				Hispanic			
	Number	% of Total	Re-enrolled	% of Quartile	Number	% of Total	Re-enrolled	% of Quartile	Number	% of Total	Re-enrolled	% of Quartile	Number	% of Total	Re-enrolled	% of Quartile
CGP Reading																
75-100	768	17.8	502	65.4	378	28.2	212	56.1	33	4.2	22	66.7	336	15.8	255	75.9
50-74	851	19.7	543	63.8	362	27.1	188	51.9	73	9.4	43	58.9	404	19.0	302	74.8
25-49	1,212	28.1	731	60.3	381	28.5	186	48.8	157	20.2	84	53.5	657	30.9	449	68.3
0-24	1,487	34.4	833	56.0	217	16.2	106	48.9	516	66.2	256	49.6	728	34.3	451	62.0
Total	4,318	100.0	2,609	60.4	1,338	100.0	692	51.7	779	100.0	405	52.0	2,125	100.0	1,457	68.6
CGP Written English Expression																
75-100	630	14.6	411	65.2	329	24.6	190	57.8	42	5.4	27	64.3	243	11.5	181	74.5
50-74	1,051	24.3	667	63.5	433	32.4	220	50.8	76	9.8	44	57.9	527	24.8	394	74.8
25-49	1,173	27.2	701	59.8	342	25.5	166	48.5	174	22.3	82	47.1	638	30.0	439	68.8
0-24	1,464	33.9	830	56.7	234	17.5	116	49.6	487	62.5	252	51.8	717	33.7	443	61.8
Total	4,318	100.0	2,609	60.4	1,338	100.0	692	51.7	779	100.0	405	52.0	2,125	100.0	1,457	68.6
CGP Computation																
75-100	1,698	39.3	1,148	67.6	638	47.7	355	55.6	135	17.3	83	61.5	871	41.0	669	76.8
50-74	1,154	26.7	709	61.4	370	27.7	192	51.9	192	24.7	116	60.4	580	27.3	393	67.8
25-49	745	17.3	406	54.5	205	15.3	89	43.4	170	21.8	90	52.9	362	17.0	221	61.1
0-24	721	16.7	346	48.0	125	9.3	56	44.8	282	36.2	116	41.1	312	14.7	174	55.8
Total	4,318	100.0	2,609	60.4	1,338	100.0	692	51.7	779	100.0	405	52.0	2,125	100.0	1,457	68.6

tests. This compares to approximately 40% of white non-Hispanics and 60% of Hispanic students. Since retention rate is lower for the low quartile ranges, an ethnic category constituted primarily of students in the lower quartile ranges will show a lower retention rate. When outcome measures are examined without considering basic skills level, figures for that ethnic category will be depressed.

One final observation concerning Table 3 is that 66% of Miami-Dade students are in the upper quartile on the CGP Computation Test. Even though the CGP Computation Test was normed on a national sample, it should be pointed out that the level of mathematics knowledge required to perform well on this examination is minimal. For black non-Hispanic students the distribution in the quartile ranges on the Computation Test is much more even than on the Reading or Written English Expression Test (42% of black non-Hispanic students are in the upper two quartiles on the Computation Test).

Table 4 presents graduation rates controlling for quartile ranges. For all students combined, note the strong relationship between the quartile range and graduation rate. Approximately 28% of students in the upper quartile on each of the tests have graduated compared with only 8% of students in the lowest quartile range. Ethnic comparisons in Table 4 are quite revealing. On the CGP Reading Test, upper quartile black non-Hispanic students show a higher graduation rate than white non-Hispanics (27.3% versus 24.6%). For the upper two quartiles combined, 44.5% of white non-Hispanics, 41.0% of black non-Hispanics and 59.1% of Hispanic students have graduated. For the lower two quartiles on the CGP Reading Test, differences between the ethnic groups are more evident. Graduation rate for black non-Hispanics is quite low, and for the bottom quartile of

Table 4

Graduation Rate by Ethnic, Controlling for Quartile Ranges on Basic Skills Tests,
Full-Time First-time-in-college Students (J's) Closing Fall 1980-81

Test and Quartile Ranges	Total All Ethnic				Selected Ethnic Categories											
					White Non-Hispanic				Black Non-Hispanic				Hispanic			
	Number	% of Total	Graduates	% of Quartile	Number	% of Total	Graduates	% of Quartile	Number	% of Total	Graduates	% of Quartile	Number	% of Total	Graduates	% of Quartile
CGP Reading																
75-100	768	17.8	217	28.3	378	28.2	93	24.6	33	4.2	9	27.3	336	15.8	108	32.1
50-74	851	19.7	194	22.8	362	27.1	72	19.9	73	9.4	10	13.7	404	19.0	109	27.0
25-49	1,212	28.1	204	16.8	381	28.5	63	16.5	157	20.2	15	9.6	657	30.9	120	18.3
0-24	1,487	34.4	131	8.8	217	16.2	23	10.6	516	66.2	25	4.8	728	34.3	76	10.4
Total	4,318	100.0	746	17.3	1,338	100.0	251	18.8	779	100.0	59	7.6	2,125	100.0	413	19.4
CGP Written English Expression																
75-100	630	14.6	176	27.9	329	24.6	88	26.8	42	5.4	6	14.3	243	11.5	76	31.3
50-74	1,051	24.3	237	22.6	433	32.4	87	20.1	76	9.8	12	15.8	527	24.8	134	25.4
25-49	1,173	27.2	209	17.8	342	25.5	54	15.8	174	22.3	14	8.1	638	30.0	133	20.9
0-24	1,464	33.9	124	8.5	234	17.5	22	9.4	487	62.5	27	5.5	717	33.7	70	9.8
Total	4,318	100.0	746	17.3	1,338	100.0	251	18.8	779	100.0	59	7.6	2,125	100.0	413	19.4
CGP Computation																
75-100	1,698	39.3	453	26.7	638	47.7	157	24.6	135	17.3	24	17.8	871	41.0	252	28.9
50-74	1,154	26.7	170	14.7	370	27.7	54	14.6	192	24.7	19	9.9	580	27.3	95	16.4
25-49	745	17.3	72	9.7	205	15.3	27	13.2	170	21.8	6	3.5	362	17.0	38	10.5
0-24	721	16.7	51	7.1	125	9.3	13	10.4	282	36.2	10	3.6	312	14.7	28	9.0
Total	4,318	100.0	746	17.3	1,338	100.0	251	18.8	779	100.0	59	7.6	2,125	100.0	413	19.4

students white non-Hispanic and Hispanic students show twice the graduation rate of black nor-Hispanics. Recalling that more than 80% of black non-Hispanics are in the lower two quartiles on the CGP Reading Test, the low graduation rates at these quartile ranges depress the overall graduation figure for black non-Hispanics. Data for the CGP Written English Expression Test show similar graduation rates by quartile for white non-Hispanics and Hispanics, but black non-Hispanic students in the upper quartiles on this test are not graduating at rates comparable to the other two ethnic categories. The same disparity is also evident in the quartile ranges in the CGP Computation Test.

These data indicate that upper quartile basic skills in Reading only were more strongly related to higher graduation rates for black non-Hispanics than were basic skills in Writing or Computation. This finding is not surprising since the curricular emphasis on writing and computation is a fairly recent phenomenon tied to the raising of standards and preparation for the CLAST. Data on future cohorts of students should show a similar relationship between upper quartile writing and computation skills and higher graduation rates.

The graduation rates for all students below the upper quartile serve to emphasize the point that Miami-Dade is successfully serving a population that would not have gained access to postsecondary education through the State University System. While the graduation rates are lower for these students (ranging from 8% to 20% depending on the quartile examined) it can be assumed that they would have had no chance at all without the community colleges' open access philosophy. The lower graduation rates and higher attrition rates (Table 3) for lower quartile

students indicate that quality control is occurring within the classroom.

Table 5 presents data on the Standards of Academic Progress by ethnic controlling for quartile ranges. For this table, the proportion of students showing three or four terms enrollment with a Clear status for all terms is displayed. Note that there is a relationship between the quartile ranges and the proportion of continuously enrolled Clear students. For all three Comparative Guidance and Placement tests, 65% of the upper quartile students enrolled for three or more terms and were in a Clear status for all terms. This proportion decreases systematically through the quartile ranges. Data for the three major ethnic categories illustrate the advantage of performing the quartile range analysis. For the CGP Reading and Written English Expression tests, black non-Hispanic students have a higher proportion of students in a continuously enrolled Clear status at almost every quartile range. For example, on the CGP Reading Test 44% of black non-Hispanic students compared to 41.9% of white non-Hispanic students enrolled for three or more terms and were on a Clear status. Since the proportions themselves are lower at the low quartile ranges and since black non-Hispanic students have more than 80% at the low quartile ranges, the figure for black non-Hispanic students as a whole is depressed. Without controlling for skill levels, the total group of white non-Hispanic students outperforms black non-Hispanics on this particular outcome measure (51.6% versus 46.2%).

Table 5

Standards of Academic Progress by Ethnic, Controlling for Quartile Ranges on Basic Skills Tests, Full-Time First-time-in-college Students (J's), Closing Fall 1980-81 Through Closing Winter 1981-82

Test and Quartile Ranges	Total All Ethnic				Selected Ethnic Categories											
					White Non-Hispanic				Black Non-Hispanic				Hispanic			
	Number	% of Total	3 + Terms All Clear	% of Quartile	Number	% of Total	3 + Terms All Clear	% of Quartile	Number	% of Total	3 + Terms All Clear	% of Quartile	Number	% of Total	3 + Terms All Clear	% of Quartile
CGP Reading																
75-100	768	17.8	503	65.5	378	28.2	221	58.5	33	4.2	20	60.6	336	15.8	247	73.5
50-74	851	19.7	511	60.1	362	27.1	187	51.7	73	9.4	41	56.2	404	19.0	274	67.8
25-49	1,212	28.1	693	57.2	381	28.5	191	50.1	157	20.2	72	45.9	657	30.9	418	63.6
0-24	1,487	34.4	718	48.3	217	16.2	91	41.9	516	66.2	227	44.0	728	34.3	383	52.6
Total	4,318	100.0	2,425	56.2	1,338	100.0	690	51.6	779	100.0	360	46.2	2,125	100.0	1,322	62.2
CGP Written English Expression																
75-100	630	14.6	415	65.9	329	24.6	192	58.4	42	5.4	25	59.5	243	11.5	184	75.7
50-74	1,051	24.3	645	61.4	433	32.4	237	54.7	76	9.8	44	57.9	527	24.8	354	67.2
25-49	1,173	27.2	650	55.4	342	25.5	157	45.9	174	22.3	75	43.1	638	30.0	404	63.3
0-24	1,464	33.9	715	48.8	234	17.5	104	44.4	487	62.5	216	44.4	717	33.7	380	53.0
Total	4,318	100.0	2,425	56.2	1,338	100.0	690	51.6	779	100.0	360	46.2	2,125	100.0	1,322	62.2
CGP Computation																
75-100	1,698	39.3	1,119	65.9	638	47.7	363	56.9	135	17.3	82	60.7	871	41.0	632	72.6
50-74	1,154	26.7	656	56.9	370	27.7	183	49.5	192	24.7	104	54.2	580	27.3	364	62.8
25-49	745	17.3	349	46.9	205	15.3	84	41.0	170	21.8	79	46.5	362	17.0	180	49.7
0-24	721	16.7	301	41.8	125	9.3	60	48.0	282	36.2	95	33.7	312	14.7	146	46.8
Total	4,318	100.0	2,425	56.2	1,338	100.0	690	51.6	779	100.0	360	46.2	2,125	100.0	1,322	62.2

RETENTION PATTERNS FOR FULL-TIME FIRST-TIME-IN-COLLEGE STUDENTS BASED ON BASIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT PERFORMANCE

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Retention Patterns for Full-Time First-Time-in-College Students
Based on Basic Skills Assessment Performance

The attached table represents a summary of retention patterns for tested full-time first-time-in-college students (J's) based on their testing performance. The Comparative Guidance and Placement Self Scoring test battery is used for basic skills assessment at Miami-Dade. There are three tests with three separate passing scores. If a student does not achieve the predetermined passing score remediation is required. For the three tests, the following are the national percentiles used for entrance into regular college level work: Math - 50th percentile, Reading - 32nd percentile, Writing - 30th percentile.

The table describes in summary fashion the pass rate on each test for the full-time first-time-in-college students who wrote the examination during the Fall Term 1980-81. There were 4,318 full-time students writing the examination. Of these, 1,619 (37.5 percent) passed all three examinations, 796 (18.4 percent) passed none, 847 (19.6 percent) passed one, and 1,056 (24.5 percent) passed two. The far right-hand column of the table shows the progression of return rates for major terms for the next four terms College-wide, regardless of test scores. Note that when test scores are not considered, 2,609, or 60.4 percent of the full-time students who were tested and enrolled during the Fall Term of 1980-81 returned during the Winter term 1981-82. This compares to 53.6 percent of all full-time students, and indicates that tested students in general have a higher re-enrollment rate. When differences in test scores are taken into account, the re-enrollment pattern is expectedly different. For those students who

passed all three examinations, 65.6 percent returned whereas for those students who passed none of the examinations, 48.7 percent returned. Therefore, just over 30 percent more of the students passing all three of the examinations returned when compared with those who passed none. There is almost no difference between the groups passing one and passing two examinations on the basis of their retention rate for 1981-82.

The graduation rate for full-time, first-time-in-college students who are tested on the Comparative Guidance and Placement test is also higher than the rate for full-time students in general. Table 1 shows a 17.3 percent graduation rate for tested students entering during the Fall Term 1980. This compares to 13.8 percent of all full-time students. A dramatic difference is also present when those students who passed none of the sub-tests are compared with those who passed all three. For the former group, only 4.0 percent have graduated whereas 26.2 percent of those who scored above the placement cut scores on all three tests have graduated. More information is being processed with regard to graduation patterns and will be reported in later studies. It is important to stress that most of the students who graduate do so after three, not two years, so in an important sense, this report on graduation rates is preliminary. Those students who are taking remedial courses will be especially delayed since those courses do not count toward graduation.

Based on the data presented in this report, if a student does not pass any of the examinations, the probability for attrition increased dramatically when compared with students who passed all three examinations. It is not surprising to find such a difference in retention rate between two groups based on their test performance but this is the first time that data have been available to demonstrate this relationship at Miami-Dade based on Comparative Guidance and Placement performance.

Table 1

Retention Patterns and Graduation Rate for Tested Full-Time First-time-in-college Students (J's) Closing Fall, 1980-81

Year/Term	Number of Tests with Scores Above Placement Score								Total all Tested Full-Time J Students	
	Three		None		One		Two			
	Re-enrolled Number	Percent	Re-enrolled Number	Percent	Re-enrolled Number	Percent	Re-enrolled Number	Percent	Re-enrolled Number	Percent
Fall 1980-81 (Initial Enrollment)	1,619	100.0	796	100.0	847	100.0	1,065	100.0	4,318	100.0
Winter 1980-81	1,430	88.3	643	80.8	741	87.5	901	85.3	3,715	86.0
Fall 1981-82	1,168	72.1	454	57.0	569	67.2	694	65.7	2,885	66.8
Winter 1981-82	1,063	65.6	388	48.7	521	61.5	637	60.3	2,609	60.4
Graduates through Summer 1981-82	425	26.2	32	4.0	104	12.3	185	17.5	746	17.3

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